

June 2, 2019

“Jonah: Man on the Run!”

“God’s Grace and His Unrelenting Pursuit”

“I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.” Jonah 4:2b

“Running From God”

“Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are...but Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction...” Jonah 1:2-3a

A. The Lord gave a message to Jonah...

“The LORD gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai...” Vs 1

1. The story of Jonah has been disputed by many liberals who did not believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. In 1849, archeologists unearthed Nineveh.
2. Jonah was a Jew, born in the small town of Gath-Hepher near Nazareth.
3. The story of Jonah took place around 765 B.C. while Jeroboam II was King of Israel.
4. Nineveh became the capital of Assyria, the most powerful empire of that day. Population: Over 120,000.
5. Nineveh was a wicked city. The Assyrians had a reputation for cruelty. The brutality was gross and disgusting. The atrocities would include skinning people alive, decapitation, mutilation, ripping out tongues, making a pyramid of human heads, piercing the chin with a rope, and forcing prisoners to live in kennels like dogs.
6. The Assyrians had no use for the Jews, and the Jews hated the Assyrians. They hated their bloodthirsty cruelty, their idolatry, and their arrogance.
7. Ultimately, God would destroy Nineveh through the words of the prophet Nahum, 150 years later.

8. In 2014, Isis destroyed what was believed to be Jonah’s tomb, outside of Mosul, as they didn’t want to share anything with Christians or Jews.
9. Jesus verified the story of Jonah in His words in Matthew.

“For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.” Matthew 12:40

B. God’s will for Jonah...

“Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce My judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are.” Vs 2

1. Jonah ran in the opposite direction of God’s direction for him.

“But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the LORD.” Vs 3a

2. Jonah went down instead of up! Nineveh was 500 miles away, 300 miles north of Baghdad, just outside of Mosul. Tarshish was 2000 miles west, near Spain – 2500 miles the wrong way!

“He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the LORD by sailing to Tarshish.” Vs 3b

3. But God sent a storm.

“But the LORD hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart.” Vs 4

4. Jonah’s choice impacted others.

“Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship.” Vs 5

5. God sent someone to Jonah to speak truth.

“But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold. So the captain went down after him. ‘How can you sleep at a time like this?’ he shouted. ‘Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives.’” Vs 5b-6

6. God exposes Jonah’s disobedience.

“Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots identified Jonah as the culprit ‘Why has this awful storm come down on us?’ they demanded. ‘Who are you? What is

your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?’” Vs 7-8

7. God’s Hand of protection was changed to a hand of correction.

“Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once!” Vs 15

8. God’s kindness provided a great fish.

“Now the LORD had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.” Vs 17

9. God used even Jonah’s sin to bring men to Him. “The sailors were awestruck by the LORD’s great power, and they offered Him a sacrifice and vowed to serve Him.” Vs 16

C. What is your Nineveh?

1. What is God calling you to do that is out of your comfort zone?
2. What is God asking you to do that you really don’t want to do?
3. Where is God calling you to respond that may appear like danger or a place of hurt?
4. What is God’s will for your life and have you been running from it?

“So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.” Ephesians 5:15-17

“...may He equip you with all you need for doing His will.” Hebrews 13:21a

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the LORD. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’” Jeremiah 29:11

Next week:

June 9: “Sitting in the Dark”

“Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and nights.” Jonah 1:17